

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of providing access to geodata,
comprising the steps of:

5 using a metadata builder to access geodata input
files and to generate metadata files associated with the
geodata files;

using a file converter to convert the geodata input
files to downloadable archive files;

10 storing the archive files and metadata files in a
repository;

using a metadata harvester to retrieve the metadata
files from the repository and to build a metadata
database;

15 storing the metadata database in memory accessible
by an internet server; and

using the internet server to: communicate via the
Internet with a user's web browser; to receive query data
from the web browser; to respond to the queries by
accessing the metadata database; to download a results
20 page containing a list of records, each record having a
metadata link to metadata associated with the record; to
download a metadata page in response to activation of the
metadata link, the metadata page containing metadata and
at least one link to an archive file; to retrieve an
25 archive file from the repository in response to
activation of the link; and to download locally the
archive file via a web browser.

2. The method of Claim 1, wherein the storing step
30 is performed by storing an XML metadata file and an HTML
metadata file for each archive file.

3. The method of Claim 1, wherein one or more file formats and archive files are derived from a number of geodata input files.

5 4. The method of Claim 1, wherein the archive files are lossless compressed data files.

5. The method of Claim 1, wherein the geodata input files may be any of the following formats: vector,
10 raster, or tabular.

6. The method of Claim 1, wherein the metadata database is a relational database.

15 7. The method of Claim 1, wherein the database access is via a Z39.50 server.

8. The method of Claim 1, wherein the metadata harvester retrieves metadata on a periodic basis.
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9. The method of Claim 1, wherein the metadata harvester retrieves only metadata files which are new since a prior harvest.

25 10. The method of Claim 1, wherein the metadata harvester retrieves both XML and HTML metadata files.

11. The method of Claim 1, wherein the metadata complies with the FDGC standard or other metadata
30 standards.

12. The method of Claim 1, wherein the internet server may receive query data in any one of the following formats: spatial, keyword, or temporal.

5 13. The method of Claim 1, wherein each record has a first metadata link to an HTML metadata file and a second metadata link to an XML file.

10 14. The method of Claim 1, wherein the metadata page further contains a thumbnail image of a map associated with the metadata.